

THE RUNNING IRON

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I trust everybody had a good Thanksgiving. Thursday was as good a day as one could ask for; then winter arrived in Nevada with a vengeance. In Elko we went from over 60 degrees on Thanksgiving Day to 3 degrees on the following Sunday with rain, sleet, snow and lots of ice. I've heard that it was below zero in some areas of the state. Our Ag Enforcement officers have been helping NHP officers with wrecks on the highways the past couple of days. I hope all the Brand Inspectors found their winter long-johns, caps and gloves. Everybody be careful out there.

Staff changes during the last quarter-We welcome James Boudinot in Austin, Jack Sparke in Lovelock, Robert Townsend in Boulder City, and Rhea Boyd in Panaca. Thanks for coming on board.

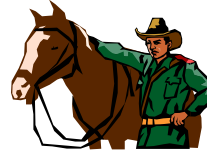
Holly McAnlis and Jim Westlake have left us. Thanks for your service.

Proposal for fee changes-Increases in salaries in the Governor's budget and approved by the last two legislatures, the recent fuel price increases, along with NHP-DOT now billing us for use of the state's communications systems has dictated that we must generate more revenue in order to continue to provide services at the current level. It was with a great deal of reluctance that I went to the Nevada Farm Bureau and Nevada Cattlemen's Association's annual meetings this past month with a proposal to increase the brand inspection fee from the current \$.90 per head to \$1.00 per head. Since we do not produce or grow a marketable product, we provide a service, and must cover the cost with a fee. Instead of a minimum charge of \$9 for up to 10 head, under the new proposal, the first head inspected will cost \$10 and \$1 for each additional head. The cost of extraordinary permits and livestock movement permits is also suggested to increase. Under this system, I think we will be able to do away with the time and mileage charge except on holidays or in cases where we only charge time and mileage rather than a per head fee, such as inventory and agency inspections. In order to spread the cost to all aspects of the industry we service rather than put it all on the producer, I have suggested increasing the fees for licensing dealers, agents, commission merchants, and all types of livestock and farm product auctions. This fee structure is not the highest nor is it the lowest in the western brand states.

The State Board of Agriculture will most likely approve going to hearings on this proposal at their winter meeting on December 6 & 7. Public hearings will then be scheduled in various communities throughout the state during January and February. The state board will then have to adopt the changes at their spring meeting in May before they

can be implemented. If you have any questions, please watch for notice of hearings and plan to attend a hearing near you or, call the office.

Remember, none of this takes place until the process is complete, at least not until early next summer.



BRAND INSPECTORS, PLEASE NOTE:

Upcoming holidays-The following holidays are recognized by the state. Please try not to schedule work on these days. If you have requests for inspections on a holiday, remember to charge time and mileage in addition to the inspection fee to help cover the agencies additional costs.

Christmas.....December 25 & 26 (Monday is the state holiday)

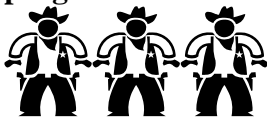
New Years.....January 1 & 2 (Monday is the state holiday)

M. L. King Day.....January 16

Presidents Day.....February 20

***Office staff asks** that you please put only one certificate book on a summary sheet. When you change to another book, start a new summary sheet. Place the inspections that were not paid for but charged together in one bunch. Thank you! Also, please do not tape coins to the certificates. Tape them to a piece of paper or card, or just put them in a small envelope. The tape tears the certificate or removes the print or writing.

Please remember to note on your summary sheet how many stray or estray livestock you identify during your inspections or are called out to look at. This is very important, as many people look at this number as a means of justifying our program.



Vehicle vs. cow, who's liable-The question has come up several times during the last few months and I'm sure some folks are or will be asking Brand Inspectors for their advice in this situation. Nevada is designated an "open range" or "fence out" state and has laws about the livestock owner not being liable for damages in a vehicle vs. cow situation on open range. However, there are exceptions where the courts have ruled that there is a shared liability, especially now that more of our highways are being fenced. In discussing this topic with the Attorney General's office, it is clear that no employee of the state should offer an opinion on this matter because there are just too many special circumstances that could come into play. If you get a question about this, just tell the person that there are too many ifs, ands and buts, and to call a lawyer or the Attorney General's office for guidance.

Enforcement Activities-The following reflect the Division's enforcement activities for the period July to October:

Number of head inspected.....	85,148
Returned lost, strayed or stolen animals.....	80
Vehicles stopped and inspected.....	671
Warning citations issued.....	42
Court citations issued.....	15
Verbal warnings issued.....	61

On behalf of myself and the staff here in the office, we would like to wish you all and your families a very happy holiday season. I thank you for the work that you do and recognize that it's not always easy or comfortable out there. I received compliments from some folks at both the Farm Bureau and the Cattlemen's Association meetings on our program and several of our inspectors. Our field inspectors are the point at which the rubber meets the road. As long as we do a professional job and give the producer his monies worth, they will respect the program.

Thanks again, and may we all enjoy a happy, healthy, new year.

